

Message Text

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SUBJ: PUBLIC APPEARANCES BY THE KING AND QUEEN

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SUMMARY: EVIDENCE OVER THE PAST YEAR HAS SUGGESTED THAT KING PHUMIPHON ADUNYADET HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY WORRIED AND CONCERNED ABOUT THE INSURGENCY AND COMMUNIST SUB-VERSION IN THAILAND. IN AN ATTEMPT TO ASSESS THIS CONCERN, THE POLITICAL SECTION HAS COMPILED SOME STATISTICS COMPARING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE KING AND QUEEN DURING THE LAST SIX MONTHS OF 1974 AND 1975. ALTHOUGH IT IS NOT ALWAYS EASY TO DISTINGUISH APOLITICAL FROM POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, IT WAS DECIDED TO DEFINE THE LATTER AS ANYTHING CONCERNED WITH PROMOTING NATIONAL UNITY OR WITH RAISING THE MORALE OF THAI POLICE AND TROOPS. THIS INCLUDES VISITS TO VILLAGES IN TROUBLED AREAS, AND VISITS TO HOSPITALS TO CHEER WOUNDED TROOPS, AS WELL AS PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN BANGKOK TO PROMOTE SIMILAR GOALS. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MAJORITY OF ALL PUBLIC APPEARANCES BY THE KING AND QUEEN IN BOTH 1974 AND 1975 WAS IN BANGKOK AND THE CENTRAL REGION. IN THE LAST SIX MONTHS OF 1974 THE KING

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AND QUEEN MADE A TOTAL OF 84 PUBLIC APPEARANCES IN THIS

REGION, OF WHICH 11 CAN BE CONSTRUED AS HAVING BEEN CONCERNED WITH THE CURRENT POLITICAL OR MILITARY SITUATION IN THAILAND. FOR THE SAME PERIOD IN 1975, THEY MADE 104 APPEARANCES, OF WHICH 16 WERE OF A POLITICAL OR MILITARY NATURE. OVERALL, THIS WAS AN INCREASE OF JUST UNDER 25 PERCENT COMPARED TO 1974.

2. IN THE NORTH, THEY MADE 18 APPEARANCES FOR THE SAME PERIOD IN 1974, OF WHICH 12 WERE OF A POLITICAL OR MILITARY NATURE. THE FIGURES FOR 1975 ARE ONLY 5 APPEARANCES, 3 OF WHICH WERE OF A POLITICAL OR MILITARY NATURE. IN THE SOUTH, THE KING AND QUEEN MADE 44 APPEARANCES FOR THE PERIOD IN 1974, OF WHICH 35 WERE OF A POLITICAL OR MILITARY NATURE. THE FIGURES FOR 1975 ARE 42 APPEARANCES, OF WHICH 30 WERE OF A POLITICAL OR MILITARY NATURE. IN THE NORTHEAST, THE KING MADE ONLY 10 VISITS FOR THE PERIOD IN 1974, 5 OF WHICH WERE OF A POLITICAL OR MILITARY NATURE. THIS COMPARES WITH 18 APPEARANCES IN 1975, ALL OF WHICH WERE OF A POLITICAL OR MILITARY NATURE. (IN DECEMBER 1975 THE CROWN PRINCE, BACK FROM MILITARY SCHOOL IN AUSTRALIA, MADE 5 TRIPS IN THE CENTRAL REGION AND THE NORTH TO BOOST MORALE.)

3. WHILE THE FIGURES FOR THE NORTHEAST SHOW A BIG INCREASE IN ROYAL ATTENTION IN 1975, THOSE FOR THE NORTH SHOW A DROP, AND BOTH ARE DWARFED BY THE NUMBER OF APPEARANCES THE KING AND QUEEN MADE IN THE SOUTH (WHICH SHOWED A SLIGHT DECREASE IN 1975). THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PUBLIC APPEARANCES MADE COUNTRYWIDE INCREASED FROM 63 IN 1974 TO 67 IN 1975, OR ABOUT 6 PERCENT.

4. IT SEEMS TO US THAT WHAT THESE FIGURES SHOW IS NOT SO MUCH AN INCREASED EFFORT, AS A CONTINUING EFFORT BY THE KING TO PROMOTE NATIONAL UNITY AND INCREASE PUBLIC MORALE. THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THAT HE IS MORE CONCERNED WITH THE INSURGENCY AND INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL THREATS TO THAILAND THAN HE WAS A YEAR AGO, BUT HIS CONCERN SEEMS TO BE EXPRESSING ITSELF IN A QUALITATIVE WAY RATHER THAN A QUANTITATIVE WAY. THIS WAS DEMONSTRATED IN THREE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED PUBLIC STATEMENTS MADE IN LATE 1975 (REFTEL A). THE STRONGEST OF THESE WAS GIVEN ON DECEMBER 14 AT THE

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ANNUAL TROOPING OF THE COLORS (REFTEL B). THE KING'S THEME WAS THAT THAILAND IS NOW THE TARGET OF OPEN AGGRESSION AND THAT ITS ENEMIES ARE DETERMINED ON TOTAL SEIZURE OF THE COUNTRY. IN MORE GENERAL SPEECHES ON DECEMBER 5 (HIS BIRTHDAY) AND ON DECEMBER 31, THE KING WARNED OF DIFFICULTIES AHEAD AND CALLED FOR UNITY AND COOPERATION IN FACING THEM.

5. COMMENT: SINCE THESE SPEECHES, THE KING HAS WITH-DRAWN A BIT FROM PUBLIC VIEW. HIS CONCERN HAS PROBABLY NOT SUBSIDED, HOWEVER, AND IT CAN BE EXPECTED THAT HE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE HIS THOUGHTS KNOWN WHEN THE OCCASION DEMANDS, AS WELL AS CONTINUE HIS MORALE BUILDING UPCOUNTRY APPEARANCE.

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